



Department of Highways District 9

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Ten state highway workers earn trophies at District 9 ‘roadeo’

Top winners advance to state competition

FLEMINGSBURG, Ky. – Ten crew members in Kentucky Department of Highways District 9 earned trophies recently in the Olympics of road workers – the Equipment Roadeo. An integral part of the Transportation Cabinet’s safety and training programs, the annual competition provides an opportunity for highway equipment operators to showcase and enhance their skills while preparing for snow and ice removal season.



WINNERS PHOTO: Highway District 9 crew members who took top individual honors at the annual equipment “roadeo” competition in August were, from left, Clyde “Addie” Thomas of Rowan County, third place in tractor mower; Bryon Mitchell of Fleming, first place in backhoe; Ronnie Thompson of Fleming, second place backhoe; James Hickerson of Fleming, third place backhoe; Garrett Lowe of Rowan County, third place snow plow; Todd Plank of Rowan, third place tractor mower; Todd Myers of Nicholas County, second place grader; Nick Clark of Nicholas, first place snow plow, third place grader, first place tractor mower and first overall; and Phillip Evans, first place grader. Not pictured: Greg Shaffer of Carter County, second place road course.

At this year's rodeo, Nick Clark of Nicholas County maintenance took first place in the Truck and Snow Plow Road Course, followed by Greg Shaffer of Carter County in second place, and Garrett Lowe of Rowan County in third.

In the backhoe competition, Fleming County maintenance took top honors as Bryon Mitchell earned the first place trophy, followed by Ronnie Thompson in second and James Hickerson in third.

Nicholas County maintenance crew members swept the grader competition with Phillip Evans in first place, Todd Myers in second and Nick Clark in third.

And, in the tractor mower event, Nick Clark earned the first place trophy, followed by Clyde "Addie" Thomas of the Morehead structures crew in second and Todd Plank of Rowan County maintenance in third.

Tallying scores from each competition, Nick Clark placed first to take the overall trophy in this year's rodeo. Nicholas County maintenance took home the overall crew trophy, scoring the most points among the District 9 counties competing.

Rodeos, which are open to any Transportation Cabinet employee who has a commercial driver's license, take place in highway districts throughout Kentucky. Highway equipment operators gather for safety talks and training, and compete among their peers in four skill contests:

- Truck and Plow Road Course, which tests an operator's precision driving techniques as they negotiate a truck with an attached snow plow blade through a tight turn in a confined space and maneuver through a lane to avoid hitting obstacles that mimic conditions encountered while plowing snow from roadways.
- Grader Competition, which tests operators' proficiency using a grader to evenly spread gravel, asphalt and other materials on roadways.
- Backhoe Competition, which tests an operator's ability to maneuver the hoe bucket in tight quarters around culverts or other drainage structures. Competitors must move golf balls around obstacles using a special hoe attachment.
- Tractor Mower Competition, which includes a road obstacle course to test operators' ability using mowers in confined spaces encountered along roadways.

"It requires expertise to properly operate snow plows, end loaders, graders and other equipment," said Bart Bryant, District 9's chief engineer. "These competitions showcase the high level of skill and professionalism that our crew members exhibit each day in keeping the state's highways maintained."

More than 50 highway equipment operators competed at District 9's rodeo held Aug. 1 at Maysville. Top finishers advance to the state finals later this summer.